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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER AND AF/SPG
NSC FOR PITTMAN
ADDIS ABAB ALSO FOR USAU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/28/2013

TAGS: PREL PGOV KPKO UN AU SU

SUBJECT: U.S. SPECIAL ENVOY VISITS DARFUR, PRESSES FOR
FASTER UNAMID DEPLOYMENT AND OFFERS ASSURANCES TO HELP

Classified By: CDA Alberto Fernandez, Reason: Sections 1.4 (b) and (d)

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) U.S. Presidential Special Envoy Richard Williamson met with UNAMID political and military leadership in El Fasher to emphasize the importance that President Bush places on resolving the crisis in Darfur and the administration's willingness to commit significant additional financial and political resources to expedite the deployment of peacekeepers. UNAMID officials described the logistical, administrative and political challenges currently facing the UN operation and identified several areas where immediate U.S. assistance is welcomed. UNAMID Joint Special Representative Adada highlighted Sudan's intent to imminently expel the peacekeeping force's British chief of staff. The Special Envoy also paid a courtesy call on the Wali of North Darfur. End summary.

JSR DIPLOMATICALLY DESCRIBES UNAMID CHALLENGES

¶2. (C) U.S. Presidential Special Envoy Richard S. Williamson, accompanied by U.S. Charge d'Affaires Alberto Fernandez, led an eleven-person delegation to El Fasher, North Darfur on February 27 to meet with senior AU-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) political and military officials, including Joint Special Representative (JSR) Rudolphe Adada, Deputy Force Commander Brigadier General Karenzi and Chief of Staff Brigadier General Patrick Davidson-Houston. The Special Envoy also paid a courtesy call on Wali of North Darfur Othman Mohammed Yousif Kibir and visited Al Salam Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp on the outskirts of El Fasher.

¶3. (C) Adada summarized the principal challenges facing UNAMID as the slow pace of incoming units, the lack of sufficient infrastructure and logistical support to accommodate the force and the recent up-tick in violence in West Darfur, which will have "obvious negative consequences for the political process." Adada explained his vision of enhancing security through accelerated deployment of UN peacekeepers but pointed out that the Government of Sudan (GoS) continues to reject non-African units, including from Thailand and Nepal. Adada described Presidential Advisor (and executor of the Darfur file) Nafie al Nafie's recent statement that "all African troops must deploy before non-Africans" as a serious setback.

¶4. (C) Commenting on recent deployment developments, the JSR

noted that the Ethiopian and Egyptian battalions are expected to arrive within the next two-three months and that, of the Heavy Support Package (HSP), only half of the Chinese engineering company and one Formed Police Unit (FPU) from Bangladesh has arrived. Adada also remarked that operational decisions such as re-directing the incoming Egyptian battalion to North Darfur, rather than South Darfur where it originally planned to deploy, might cause additional delays. (Note: UNAMID Force Commander Martin Luther Agwai pushed to position the Egyptian battalion in North Darfur, where local sentiment is more favorably inclined toward Egyptians and its capabilities are better suited for the operating environment. UN Assistant Secretary General and Head of the Department of Field Support Jane Hall-Lute, as well as UNAMID Integrated Support Services (ISS) officers opposed the move because of the logistical implications; in late February, DPKO Chief Jean-Marie Guehenno ultimately decided to support Agwai, who will travel in the first week of March to Cairo to meet with Egyptian defense officials. End Note.)

S/E EXHORTS URGENCY, PLEDGES HELP IN UNAMID DEPLOYMENT

¶15. (C) Special Envoy Williamson acknowledged the unique challenges and difficult operating environment--both politically and militarily--facing UNAMID. He emphasized, however, that expediting the peacekeepers' deployment is an urgent priority of the U.S. President, and the U.S. Government is prepared to expend significant financial and political resources to ensure that UNAMID expands rapidly and with the training and equipment it requires to function effectively. As a first step, Williamson held that UNAMID should aim to absorb up to 3,600 African troops by June. This accomplished, he said, it was his belief) based on

recent conversations with al Nafie) that the GoS would accept the Thai and Nepalese units shortly thereafter. (Note: The 3,600 additional troops derive from one each 800-soldier Ethiopian and Egyptian battalions, fresh rotation of existing battalions that will be brought up from 650 to 800 personnel, and the injection of Egyptian transport and communications companies. End Note.)

¶16. (C) Underscoring the need for urgency in "getting boots on the ground" and the U.S. desire to help proactively in accomplishing this objective, the Special Envoy solicited specific input from UNAMID officials on areas in need of immediate assistance. Beyond material, training, equipping and financial contributions, including the 100 million dollars pledged by President Bush during his recent tour in Africa, Williamson stressed that he would seek to leverage U.S. political clout to aid UNAMID, including--if necessary--helping to resolve the issue of the re-positioned Egyptian battalion.

AREAS FOR POTENTIAL USG ASSISTANCE

¶17. (C) Responding to the Special Envoy's queries throughout several meetings, the JSR, Deputy JSR for Operations and Administration Hossein Medilly, the Deputy Force Commander and the Chief of Staff variously highlighted key areas where the U.S. might lend assistance, including:

- Provision of water treatment and acquisition equipment at numerous UNAMID camps.
- Assistance in ensuring that incoming battalions are not only fully equipped but are also trained technically and tactically on their equipment and have the means to maintain and sustain it in the field throughout their rotation.
- Expedited camp expansion to accommodate 800-soldier battalions and a potential increased force flow.
- Creation of self-sufficient "reception capacity" at several sites in Darfur to receive incoming units and serve as transition space.
- Assistance in encouraging the Canadian helicopter

contractor, Skylink, to move its personnel and equipment out of theater so that UNAMID can bring in some of their own helicopters currently based in Khartoum.

-- Infusion of "proper" military vehicles that are more consistent with the stronger mandate of UNAMID (vice AMIS) and the more complex security environment on the ground.

-- Encouragement of Western militaries to send additional advisors to UNAMID to focus specifically on developing staff capacity

¶8. (C) The Special Envoy observed that many of the areas where UNAMID requires support could have been addressed earlier with better communication between the UN and USG. Williamson related that his guidance from the President is "to be exceedingly proactive in supporting UNAMID...and the UN should test us." On Skylink's helicopters, the Special Envoy committed to expediting resolution of the issue with the Canadians "by next Wednesday." He reiterated that the U.S. wants to commit its resources wisely, which is why transparent dialogue with UNAMID and DPKO regarding critical shortfalls is paramount. (Comment: There is general consensus among the military and civilian components of UNAMID that logistical support remains the "make or break" factor for effective UNAMID deployment and sustainability. There are differences between the components, however, in how to tackle the problem, which could diminish the UN's ability to clearly communicate its needs to the U.S. and other donors. Skylink is illustrative: Despite a contract funded by the Canadian government through March 31, UNAMID civilian leadership elected, based on apparent past disputes with the company, no longer to task Skylink aircraft, over the objections of the Force Commander, who sought the additional air assets to bolster military operations. End Comment.)

----- NEW UNAMID CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS -----

¶9. (C) Providing an overview of the force's revised concept of operations, a senior UNAMID planning officer described the new plan to project peacekeeping patrols from approximately 35 base camps, including three &supercamps8 in Nyala, El Fasher and El Geneina. UNAMID planners scrapped the previous concept of operations, which envisioned up to 55 battalion and company sites scattered throughout Darfur, as they

realized that it would be logistically infeasible to re-supply so many camps by air (essential in Darfur, given the vast distances) and leave the more numerous, smaller camps vulnerable to enemy attack. With fewer bases, Chief of Staff Davidson-Houston observed, less soldiers would be required for camp protection and more could be patrolling, usually going out for seven to 14 days at a time.

Davidson-Houston acknowledged that the new concept of operations, already approved by DPKO, inherently suggests different training and equipment requirements, such as skills in long-range patrolling, rationed meals, reliable mobile communications gear and appropriate tentage. He highlighted that UNAMID would be better off if it receives fewer pieces of military equipment that included the "full package" (pre-deployment training, spare parts, maintenance support, tactical training, etc.) rather than piecemeal gear that is difficult to sustain and incompatible across the force.

----- FATE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF? -----

¶10. (C) Broaching the topic of the Sudan's repeated demands to expel military Chief of Staff Patrick Davidson-Houston, JSR Adada lamented that Sudanese officials showed little willingness to soften their stance, insisting that the Cos leave by the end of February. (Comment: Davidson-Houston remained in El Fasher as of February 29. He has been a critical factor in driving UNAMID deployment forward, possibly one of the reasons--beside his British nationality--that Sudan seeks to eject him. Khartoum canceled February 28 meetings on the topic with the JSR, who

went to AU headquarters in Addis to seek further guidance.
End Comment.)

REAL CONCERN WITH LOGISTICAL PROBLEMS

¶11. (S) At the end of the lunch, the civilian representatives departed, and the UNAMID Military representatives stayed to discuss specific operational concerns with US DOD personnel. The discussion soon turned frank on the lack of internal operational control the UNAMID Force Commander has over the support structure for his troops. Chief of Staff Davidson-Houston stated that General Agwai only commands the peace-keeping troops. All logistics, transportation, and communication assets are controlled by independent UNAMID civilian section heads. Davidson-Houston stated that "no U.S. Commander would ever agree to this kind of task organization." General Agwai is responsible for overall military operations, but he has very little influence over the actual support of his own troops. The implication was that if the military staff had full authority over the logistics infrastructure, operations could be conducted more efficiently and effectively.

COURTESY CALL WITH NORTH DARFUR WALI

¶12. (C) Interspersed with UNAMID meetings, the Special Envoy made a courtesy call on Wali of North Darfur Othman Mohammed Yousif Kibir. The Wali pledged to expedite UNAMID's deployment, in accordance with the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), and pressed the U.S. Government to exert more pressure on rebels to join a peace process, give more focus to early recovery and rural development programs in Darfur (as a means of encouraging voluntary IDP returns), and facilitate stabilized relations between Chad and Sudan.

¶13. (SBU) Special Envoy Williamson conveyed the importance that the U.S. administration places on the Darfur issue and its willingness to help resolve the conflict. He elaborated that the U.S. intends to continue providing significant humanitarian assistance in Darfur and urged the Wali to assure access for all relief workers. Williamson further noted U.S. appreciation for Sudan's acceptance of UNAMID and the expectation that the Wali would continue to facilitate the deployment of the peacekeeping force throughout North Darfur.

¶14. (U) This cable was cleared by Special Envoy Williamson.
FERNANDEZ